# The Inquirer

*THE UNITARIAN AND FREE CHRISTIAN WEEKLY • Founded 1842*

*REGISTERED AS A NEWSPAPER* *No. 6103* *Saturday, June 27, 1959* *Price 3½d.*


# THE ABIDING CHOICE

## BARTH OR SCHWEITZER?

### A MODERN CHOICE IN LIVERPOOL A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

**By Ian Sellers**

DISSENT in Liverpool has always had its detractors, some just, some unjust. In the 1860's, however, it was exposed to the attacks of one, Canon Hume, whose learning was considerable, whose reputation national, and the burden of whose complaint, reinforced by his own experience as vicar of the slum parish of Vauxhall, was that Nonconformity, by a kind of natural law, moved out to the rising suburbs as fast as its middle-class adherents could escape from the older and grimier centres of urban population. Hume, a brilliant antiquarian and statistician, pressed home his point by the aid of public meetings, tracts, pamphlets, and, not least, an impressive coloured map, "to show the migration of Dissenting Chapels in Liverpool".

No one can question the validity of much of Hume's argument, but in Toxteth, which he cited as one of the most glaring examples of Dissenting indifference, his challenge had already been taken up, by two groups, widely differing in religious outlook, alike only in having experienced an upsurge of missionary zeal. It is the purpose of this article to examine what motives drove two men as dissimilar as W. P. Lockhart, Baptist and founder of Toxteth Tabernacle, and John Johns, Unitarian and first minister of the Domestic Mission, to launch their respective endeavours. For undoubtedly, these two men, widely as the dates and lengths of their ministries differed (Johns 1836-47), (Lockhart 1863-93), were both in life and in posthumous reputation, two of the most distinguished Liverpool personalities of the past century.

*

Lockhart and Johns differed greatly in their birth and upbringing. Johns was the son of a south country artist, early fell victim to literary Romanticism, turned poet, and was probably only saved from a life of obscurity and failure by the influence of the Americans, Channing and Tuckerman, which inspired him to enter the Unitarian ministry, and work out his ideals as a Minister to the Poor. Lockhart was the son and grandson of Scotch Baptist Ministers, from whom he inherited a sound mixture of Calvinistic piety and business acumen. Lockhart had moved to Birkenhead primarily to expand his family's shipping interests. Here, he had begun his evangelical ministry, moving to Liverpool in 1861. The rest of his life was spent in ceaseless missionary and business activity, both of which were pursued with great avidity, but neither of which was ever allowed to preponderate over the other.

Both Johns and Lockhart lend themselves easily to caricature: Johns, because he is so typical a figure of the 1840's, when Romanticism had reached its fantastic heights. His remarks, even on the most prosaic subjects, were couched in the most flowery lyricism. He recommended one of his pet schemes, allotments, in the following manner: "here we find Merrie England again, not in fields reeking with conflict of the Roses, nor in the outlaws' bows ringing in the moonlit glades of Sherwood". Even his ministry, intensely practical though it was, is compared to a "prophet's harp", unplayable till, "the people's tears are dried from its strings".

How could such a dreamer, "as sensitive as *if* he had no skin", become a friend of the destitute, the confidant of the Toxteth people, such that in the end, he could sacrifice his life for them, contracting cholera while helping to remove a corpse from a foetid cellar?

*

Even his admirers could not claim that Lockhart was not a caricature of nineteenth century Nonconformity at its most crassly Evangelical. The Chadbands and Pontifexes of literature pale in comparison. His religiosity touches the farcical. He had repeated hand injuries from illustrating too dramatically in his pulpit the swiftness of the soul's descent to Hell. The social gospel he dismissed angrily as "a lot of rubbish about land and wages". For the last public execution in Liverpool, he wrote two nauseating tracts, "before" and "after" the event.

The great gulf of temperament which separated two such men affected their whole approach to the problem of missionary work. Johns, whose rhetorical powers were feeble, and from whom many found it difficult to draw conversation, shrank from the society of people for whom he could do no good, but had early discovered himself in rough social intercourse with the physically and spiritually impoverished. Among these, he loved to labour, and his love was returned. One of the prime objects of his ministry was so to identify himself with his folk that all thoughts of class difference, "the lower orders, the common people, and all suchlike oppression and insult, contempt and degradation", should be overwhelmed by the warm tide of human fellowship.

Sympathy of this sort was impossible for Lockhart, who, in his writings reveals the unbridgeable gulf which divided him from the labouring classes. He belonged to the upper structure of society and had never any use for those below his standard. Physical contact with the poor disgusted him. One night in his house, he preached "the Bleeding Lamb", to a group of business friends with such power that the menials in the kitchen below were affected by the enthusiasm above, and Lockhart had perforce to go down and exhort them!

Religion of this type is obnoxious to the Liberal Christian in all ages, and yet it must in all fairness be granted that Lockhart chose voluntarily to work in an area he found distasteful and unsympathetic and risk there much of his wealth, many of his connections and even more of his reputation. The question remains—why did he do it, is his career essentially as explicable

as Johns' ? Here at once, we are confronted with a problem of contemporary theology, for just as it was the *guilt of society* which Johns stressed as the motive for his whole work (" Providence has not made the prosperity of one class to be dependant upon the misery of another "), and which he emphasized again and again in his annual reports, so it was a genuine conviction of the *guilt* of fallen humanity which inspired Lockhart. " All haved sinned, and I must speak to every young man I know about his soul ".

If a diagnosis is made today, as inevitably it must be, will it not still reflect the principles of either Johns or Lockhart ? And not only the disease, but the remedy also. Salvation too, like sin, we are assured, has bounds so wide and touches at so many different points that once again argument is silenced before the awesome wondrousness of it all. Yet is such unquestioning silence possible ? The way of Lockhart may have been refined by the modern theologian, Barth, but the path trodden by Johns still from time to time attracts its Schweitzer.

### The Printing Dispute

We apologise to our readers for the size and unusual presentation of the Inquirer this week. This has been made necessary by the dispute in the printing industry. We shall do our best to maintain publication on an emergency basis, and trust like everyone else concerned that the dispute will soon be settled.

## UNITARIANS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

**John Rowland**

MUCH comment was heard at this year's General Assembly Meetings at Leeds to the effect that practically the whole of the session of the Assembly which dealt with matters of business and voted on them, thus endeavouring to give expression to the feeling of the Churches as a whole, was concerned with domestic issues—the filling of many pulpits when few ministers were available, and the paying of adequate stipends from inadequate funds. Such comments were not critical of the fact that domestic issues were debated—these are obviously of great importance—but they were very critical of the fact that in a world which is divided on many matters, from nuclear warfare to the Wolfenden Report, the voice of Unitarianism should apparently be silent.

Thanks to the courtesy of an American friend I have just been sent the official programme of the American Unitarian Association's May Meetings (the American equivalent to our General Assembly meetings), and the contrast is very striking indeed. I think it is worth while drawing attention to these things, since they demonstrate that it is possible to deal with domestic issues and at the same time to face the great problems of the world.

★

Let me just list some of the questions which were discussed by our American friends. There was a resolution dealing with the possibility of what are called " banks for humanity," by means of which human beings can donate their bodies for medical research, and particular parts of their bodies (after death) for the use of doctors. There was a resolution asking for more integration of white and coloured children in American schools. There was a resolution supporting the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People. Some of these, of course, were on specifically American issues, as were others asking for a National Health Insurance Scheme, for better facilities for higher education, for better conditions for workers who might be moving about the country from one job to another.

On international affairs, however, there were several resolutions too. One of these proposed that the American Unitarian Association should support the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (which is the American equivalent of the British Nuclear Disarmament Movement) ; another suggested that there should be a movement to admit to full membership of the United Nations those countries now excluded, and yet another set out a more liberal policy towards Africa, by which the nations of that continent should be led towards independence. There was even a resolution asking the Governments of the United States and Canada to get together to make for freer trade, thus giving a lead towards the lowering of trade barriers throughout the world.

★

Only when all these had been dealt with did the American Unitarian Association turn to domestic affairs. Now, I do not know, of course, what was the fate of these resolutions, some of which may well have been defeated ; but the problems were at least *faced* ; they were not ignored and pushed into the background, as similar problems, it seems to me, are continually ignored and pushed into the background by the Unitarian Churches in Britain, if the deliberations of the General Assembly are to be taken as representative.

Now I am aware that there are many difficulties to be faced here. I know that our General Assembly Meetings are limited in time (the Americans run their meetings from a Friday to a Tuesday, which gives them more time) ; but I wonder, year by year, whether the day is not ripe for the General Assembly Council to ask whether the old pattern of our meetings cannot be reconsidered and recast. Apart from anything else, if a group of churches finds itself able to take a stand on some great moral or ethical issue in the national or the international field, it will find itself more readily accepted by the Press and the public as a worth-while body. I know some of the difficulties ; but difficulties are there to be overcome. And if we do not try, somehow, to overcome them, we shall be more and more a little body of people, looking inward at our own affairs, concerned wholly with making ends meet, and forgetting that we have a clear ethical duty to the world.

I am not suggesting that we should not consider the problems of man-power, the financial problems, and all the others which face every religious denomination in these difficult times. We have to consider such things, we have to try to thresh out agreed solutions ; but if we ignore the greater issues of the world, we shall do so at our peril.

## A LIVERPOOL UNITARIAN

### WILLIAM RATHBONE, FOUNDER OF DISTRICT NURSING

**By Albert Smith**

*(The following article is the substance of a sermon preached by the Rev. Albert Smith at a special centenary service commemorative of the foundation of District Nursing.)*

" OF all the multitudinous forms of social service carried on today ", it has been said, " none is more real and practical, yet more unobtrusive, than what is called District Nursing. Nor is there any of greater value. It is indeed unique in more ways than one, not only in regard to health but also as a social and an educational influence ". It came into being perhaps late in 1995, following a domestic loss deeply felt by William Rathbone, a Liverpool Unitarian, though still influenced by the Quaker loyalties of the family background, and a wealthy, charitably disposed merchantman. Without warning, at the turn of the year 1859, the health of William Rathbone's wife rapidly declined. In spite of medical skill and the kindly attentions of Mary Robinson, a fully trained nurse, Mrs. Rathbone died in May, leaving her husband with the care of five young children. He attempted to dull the sharpness of his grief by immersing himself increasingly in his business, but the need for something more absorbing, which might also be a fitting memorial to his wife made itself felt. It occurred to him that the trained nursing his late wife had received had made quite a noticeable difference even in a home where every care, comfort and aid in nursing a sick person were available. What then must illness mean in the homes of the poor where trained attention and help were unavailable ? He decided upon trying out a rather novel, even bold experiment and District Nursing was the result as well as a close association of William Rathbone with nursing for the rest of his life.

★

He already knew from first hand experience in house-to-house visiting as a collector for the Liverpool Provident Society the conditions and hardships common to the poor of Liverpool—at that time the city with the greatest amount of poverty and the worst housing conditions of any in England. He knew, only too well, the demoralising effects of illness, and therefore approached Mary Robinson with the proposition that she might consider the hitherto unheard-of idea of nursing poor sick folk in their own homes. The experiment was to be tried for three months and he himself would finance it.

All honour to Mary Robinson that, whatever her misgivings and she could not have been without a few, she consented to co-operate. But at the end of only one month she tearfully confessed to William Rathbone that because of the awful things she had seen, the misery and the dreadful conditions she had met with, she could not go through with the project. Believing strongly in his idea and the immense good that could result from it, he pleaded with and persuaded Mary Robinson to persevere. At the end of the three months she, the first District Nurse ever, was fully convinced of the value of her task and confessed that, if William Rathbone would continue to back her, she would not return to any other kind of nursing. Here was conclusive proof of a crying human need which ought to be met. He resolved that he at least would try to meet it.

★

But when for the extension of his project he sought to engage additional trained nurses he soon discovered there were none to be had. Only two Nurses' Training Schools existed in the country, both situated in London, and neither could spare him a single nurse. He appealed to Florence Nightingale who replied that Liverpool should consider establishing a Training School at its own hospital, the Royal Infirmary. Consultations with the Infirmary Management followed, the outcome of which was that, as the Infirmary accommodation was unsuitable, William Rathbone generously undertook to build, at his own expense, a Nurses' Training School and Home attached to the Infirmary. Their planning occupied much of his time and thought, but gave him great pleasure and brought about the commencement of a friendship with Florence Nightingale broken only by his death.

★

As fast as nurses could be trained, the work of District Nursing spread. By the end of 1865, six years after Mary Robinson had pioneered the work, the whole of Liverpool had been divided into eighteen different districts each served by a trained nurse—from which arrangement the name "District Nursing" came to be used—supervised by one or more ladies resident in Liverpool who organised the work of the nurse, paid for her lodging and provided what medical necessities the patients required, but were too poor to afford by themselves. And, in order to see for himself how this plan operated, William Rathbone deputised for one Lady-Superintendent during her twelve months' absence, accompanying the nurse on her rounds and interesting himself at close quarters in her work, thus gaining an intimate knowledge of it which was of tremendous value to him, and always available to others, in his life-long support of and active interest not only in Nursing but additionally in Education and Poor Law reform.

The particular branch of the family to which William Rathbone belonged owed its connection with Liverpool to his great-great-grandfather, also called William, a timber stayer and a Quaker, who left Gawsworth, near Macclesfield, in 1730, for Liverpool to found the prosperous family business of Rathbone and Sons., merchanteers and ship-owners. William's mother was Elizabeth Greg, daughter of Samuel Greg, of Quarry Bank, Styal, near Wilmslow, also Unitarians and an enlightened family in its relations with and concern for the conditions of the people employed in their mills. William was born in 1819, and later, for more than a quarter of a century, was a Member of Parliament, in which respect he was followed by his daughter Eleanor, and as such his main interest lay in Local Government in which he engineered many desirable reforms. The Liverpool University and the University of Wales are monuments to his care about and foresight in Education. He died in 1902 widely mourned. "Among the masses of flowers" at his funeral, wrote his daughter, "lay one wreath from his veteran friend, Florence Nightingale bearing the inscription, 'In remembrance and humblest love of one of God's best and greatest sons'".

---

## FROM MY JOURNAL

**By Simplicitas**

I NOTICED Y. this morning somewhat impatiently listening to a tirade from Mrs. M. "What does Mrs. M. want, Y.?" I asked when he eventually came into the vestry to enter up the attendance figures. "Nothing that time won't cure, Mr. S." She has these notions and forgets them if you leave her be." He blotted the book and went on. "You've no idea, Mr. S., how many bright ideas fade before I remember to put them on the agenda paper. If they are still alive for a fortnight, then folk are sure to jog my memory. If they manage to remember them that long, then I remember to put them down for the next meeting. My word though, Mr. S.," he went on. "You wouldn't like the look of the agenda paper if I didn't allow a bit of fading out to happen! I'm a church benefactor, that's what I am. And none of you give me the credit for it!"

We settled down at our so called "Literary Society" tonight to discuss the subject of television. All the usual points were made, but looking back on the evening I am struck by the characteristic way in which our various speakers approached the subject. Mr. K., our schoolmaster convert, who came specially to open the discussion, naturally spoke as an educationist. Then Y. weighed in with its advantages for the working man. Dr. Mary T. spoke strongly on the physical ills it may cause in young and old alike. It pleased our baker because overmuch sitting and looking made people have more meals at home, and they further stocked up on biscuits for chance visitors. A member of our library staff said how it stimulated the issue of relevant non-fiction books. I naturally hoped that an increasing wonder at the world would bring a growing sense of God. These were no more than the comments one would expect. My interest is, however, that looking over the session's discussions, I recognize this same pattern of personal comment whatever our subject. How one-angled we do become! It is inevitable perhaps, but we ought to be aware of our limited viewpoint.

I am often surprised at the unpremeditated ideas that find expression during a carefully planned discourse. I was preaching this morning on "The Thought of God." Subconsciously I must have taken in the congregation. There was young Stephen on holiday from university, going through a marked humanist phase. Next was Miss Y. full of rich feeling towards the Eternal Love. Behind her sits schoolmaster K. wrestling with God who is not this and not that, and Mrs. M. who still thinks of God as one who should reward her virtuous life with suitable benefits. Away at the back, with one eye on the door, is always Y., whose God is so Unitarian that He can't be a Free Christian too. Thereupon I found myself being unusually personal—for me—and confessing how difficult it is for a minister to expound truth and speak acceptably in the one discourse to the very different people who gather in a Unitarian congregation. One can frame one's prayers in such a way that they can vary in import, according to the ideas of the listener, but mental progress and spiritual counsel require individual attention. I've no doubt that I shocked Y. by saying I wish sometimes I were a Roman Catholic priest who could

*Continued on page four*

# THE LINDSEY PRESS

**THE STORY OF ESSEX HALL**
*by Mortimer Rowe, B.A., D.D.*

with illustrations, paper covers 6s. by post 6s. 6d.
cloth boards 7s. 6d. by post 8s. 1d.

The history of Essex Hall has hitherto been recorded only in fragments . . . but is now presented in the form of a coherent and continuous narrative . . .

**A GOLDEN TREASURY OF THE BIBLE**
**(and Apocrypha)**
*Edited by Mortimer Rowe, B.A., D.D.*

cloth 12s. 6d. by post 14s. 3d.
leather, with gilt edges 25s. by post 26s. 9d.

The best of the Bible and Apocrypha in attractive and readable form; the various books grouped and arranged in an intelligible form, with a short introduction to the selections from each book.

**AN UNFETTERED FAITH**
The religion of a Unitarian
*by A. Phillip Hewett, M.A., S.T.M.*
2nd imp. 8s. 6d. by post 9s. 2d.

**THE LINDSEY PRESS**

ESSEX HALL, 1-6 ESSEX ST., STRAND, LONDON, W.C.2.



**ADVERTISEMENT RATES**

Births, Marriages, Deaths, Changes of Address
3 lines, 6s. 0d. minimum. Each additional line, 2s. 0d.

Miscellaneous — Prepaid
4d. per word, minimum 8s.

W. Heffer Biggs Press Organisation Limited,
Kingsgate House, 115, Holborn, London, W.C.1
Telephone: CHAncery 8732

Display Rates on Application — Special Terms for a Series


THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, Rev. A. W. Vallance, B.A., will preach at Kendal Unitarian Chapel, Market Place, on Sunday, July 5th at 6.30. Conversazione follows. Holidaymakers warmly welcomed, also to Coffee Club, every Saturday from 10 a.m. at the Chapel.


**THE INQUIRER**

All letters and manuscripts for the Editor must reach the Office not later than Monday morning for publication the same week. All communications must be accompanied by the name and address of the sender.

Subscription Rates: £1 3s. 10d. per annum (post free).

Those having any difficulty in obtaining copies of the paper should communicate direct with the publisher.

Address: 14 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.
TEL.: EUS. 7154 Editorial: EUS. 2912


*Continued from page three*

give personal religious advice through the medium of the confessional. It now occurs to me I might have added the wish that Unitarians would be less shy, and instead of engaging their visiting minister with trivialia about town affairs, would lead him on to talk of things religious, even though it started with no more than a comment on the theme of last Sunday's sermon. We ought to outgrow this convention that a Unitarian minister never talks to his people about personal religion. Would that some of my congregation would break the ice. I would most willingly do so, but I think it would be less embarrassing for them to make the start.

## WORLD REFUGEE YEAR

**By Geoffrey W. Petts**

As you read these words most of you will be seated comfortably at home. Around you will be a sufficiency of life's necessities: food, warmth, clothing. Tonight you will sleep securely in a bed. Tomorrow or the day after you will go to your work.

Meanwhile, on this same planet, separated only by time and distance, is a nation unlike any previously known. Its people are drawn from many countries, speak many tongues, are variously coloured. Tonight they will "sleep" hungry and cold in makeshift hovels, caves, on roof tops, even in holes in the ground. Tomorrow they will face yet another day of misery and privation. Some will never see the dawn. The dawn will see them—dead in the gutter.

Does this shock you? It ought. It is happening now to the majority of some 25 million men, women and children. What is being done? Quietly and continuously for many years, relief agencies have kept up a steady flow of help in every conceivable way. Now a concerted effort is to be made by the member nations of UNO. Britain, who sponsored the resolution to hold a World Refugee Year, is committed to certain objectives in certain areas, namely assistance to the remaining displaced persons of Europe (400,000); to the Arab refugees from Palestine (1 million); the Chinese refugees in Hong Kong 800,000), and the European refugees in China (8,000).

A target of £2 million, excluding Governmental contributions, has been set by the U.K. Committee, and towards this the 14 principal relief agencies in Britain are pledged to a re-doubling of their efforts.

One of these agencies—a frequent advertiser in these pages—is the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief, of which the writer is an official representative. The Committee's resources are extensive and it is desired that they should be put to the fullest use. Ministers and Secretaries may care to know that the Committee can supply in bulk a selection of leaflets and stencilled broadsheets on the refugee situation in different countries; bulletins and newsheets containing up-to-date news from the field; arrange for the loan of film-strips and cine films (16 and 35 mm., including *A Fair Cry*) and photographs for display purposes.

Information can also be given to Women's Leagues prepared to knit blankets and babies' layettes, which are urgently needed, and to those who might consider "sponsoring" a refugee child. The Committee's Gift Shop at 17, Broad Street, Oxford (the address to which all enquiries should be made) is open for the receipt of any saleable item from jewellery to books and musical instruments.

In addition, the Committee's country-wide Appeal Organisers will be glad to offer advice and practical assistance in the launching of local drives for money and clothing. Special leaflets can be printed, posters, collecting tins, flags, sacks for clothing and footwear can be supplied and all arrangements made for the dispatch of garments received and money donated.

In connection with this, the writer is prepared, on behalf of the Oxford Committee, to visit any locality within 40 to 50 miles of his home: 47, Alkincoats Road, Colne, Lancashire.

It is said that by works a man is justified, not only by faith. Now is the time for our Movement to prove itself equal to this teaching.

Sir: In reply to the many enquiries which I have received from *Inquirer* readers, I beg to state that a Unitarian Party will be going to the Passion Play at Oberammergau in 1960 (August 7th-20th). The tour will also include a stay in the Austrian Tyrol and in the Rhineland with a sail along the Rhine. Both lone travellers and church groups will be especially welcome. Provisional bookings must be made without delay as the accommodation at the village of Oberammergau is very limited, and the party's block booking is, unfortunately, confined to forty people only. Those who are interested please write to me immediately. Yours, G. W. Parkinson, 10a, Westbourne Grove, Scarborough.

Printed by Stuart Rose Stereotypers Ltd., High Road, Ilford, Essex, and Published by The Lindsey Publishing Co., Ltd., at the Temporary Office, 14 Gordon Square W.C.1.—Miscellaneous (Wholesale) Items Advertising, Wednesday, June 24, 1959